

Listing of the Claims:

1-66. (Cancelled)

67. (Previously amended) A method for surgically implanting a flat implantable device made of material with a reticular structure for supporting the female pelvic organs, having a central body with a trapezoid shape with small and large bases and four arms, comprising:

- an anterior portion corresponding to the smaller base of the trapezium, from the ends of which branch off two anterior arms;
- a central portion corresponding to the central part of the trapezium;
- a posterior portion corresponding to the larger base of the trapezium, from the ends of which branch off two posterior arms diverging from each other and parallel to the sides of the trapezium;

characterized in that the said two anterior arms branch off from the anterior portion in opposite directions and are generally coaxial with each other and generally parallel to said smaller base; and the said central portion has a central hole from which starts a cleft,

wherein, when the said device is inserted into the vaginal cavity of the patient by means of vaginal surgery, said method comprises: making an incision extending from the anterior vaginal wall to the posterior vaginal wall; penetrating the tendinous arch of the levator ani through the anterior vaginal wall; bilaterally opening said tendineous arch for about 2 cm; fixing the two anterior arms of the said device respectively on the right and on the left on the said opened tendineous arch; and bilaterally fixing the posterior arms to the sacrospinous ligament or to the iliococcygeal muscle.

68. (Currently amended) An implantable device made of soft sheet material with a reticular structure insertable by vaginal surgery into a female pelvis for supporting female pelvic organs, comprising:

(a) a central body having opposite anterior and posterior portions having anterior and posterior terminal edges respectively, and having opposite sides each with a terminal side edge, about a central longitudinal axis, said sides defining between them a width the maximum dimension of which is designated W,

(b) a pair of anterior arms extending symmetrically outward from said anterior portion transversely of said central longitudinal axis, said anterior arms having terminal ends spaced apart from each other a distance greater than W,

(c) a pair of posterior arms extending symmetrically downward from said central body and diverging from each other and having terminal ends spaced apart from each other a distance greater than W,

(d) said central ~~[[portion]]~~ body having a hole extending through said sheet material, said hole located between said anterior and posterior portions and generally centrally between said sides, said central ~~[[portion]]~~ body including a cleft extending from said hole rearward to said terminal posterior edge.

69. (Previously presented) A device according to claim 68 wherein said anterior arms extend generally coaxially.

70. (Previously presented) A device according to claim 68 wherein said anterior arms extend generally perpendicularly to said central longitudinal axis.

71. (Previously presented) A device according to claim 68 wherein each of said arms is elongated about an arm central axis, and each of said arms has a proximal portion adjacent said central body and a distal portion, and for each of said arms its proximal portion has breadth greater than the breadth of its distal portion.

72. (Previously presented) A device according to claim 71 wherein each of said anterior and posterior arms is tapered along its length to have a smaller distal portion than its proximal portion.

73. (Previously presented) A device according to claim 68 wherein said sheet material with a reticular structure has extending transversely through it holes having diameter in

the range of 1 to 7mm and spaced apart from each other a distance in the range of 0.05 to 0.10cm.

74. (Currently amended) An implantable device made of soft sheet material with a reticular structure for supporting female pelvic organs when inserted by vaginal surgery, comprising:

a central body having opposite anterior and posterior portions having anterior and posterior terminal edges respectively, and having opposite sides each with a terminal side edge, about a central longitudinal axis, said sides defining between them a width the maximum dimension of which being designated W,

a pair of anterior arms extending symmetrically outward from said anterior portion transversely of said central longitudinal axis, said anterior arms having terminal ends spaced apart from each other a distance greater than W,

a pair of posterior arms extending symmetrically downward from said central body and diverging from each other and having terminal ends spaced apart from each other a distance greater than W,

said central ~~[[portion]]~~ body having a hole extending through said sheet material, said hole located coaxially with said central longitudinal axis and between said anterior and posterior portions and generally centrally between said terminal side edges, said central ~~[[portion]]~~ body including a cleft extending from said hole to one of said anterior and posterior terminal edges or to one of said opposite terminal side edges.

75. (Previously presented) The device according to Claim 74, wherein said material with a reticular structure is selected from the group consisting of materials of organic origin and materials of a synthetic nature.

76. (Currently amended) An implantable device made of soft sheet material with a reticular structure insertable by vaginal surgery into a female pelvis for supporting female pelvic organs, comprising:

a central body having a generally trapezoidal shape with small and large bases generally parallel to each other, two opposite side edges, said central body comprising an anterior portion with an anterior edge that is said small base and a posterior portion with a posterior edge that is said large base,

a pair of anterior arms extending symmetrically and generally coaxially outward from said anterior portion,

a pair of posterior arms extending symmetrically and downward from said central body's posterior portion and diverging from each other,

said central ~~[[portion]]~~ body having a hole extending through said sheet material, said hole located generally centrally between and inwardly of said sides and between said anterior and posterior edges, said central ~~[[portion]]~~ body including a cleft extending from said hole to one of said anterior and posterior edges or to one of said opposite side edges.

77.(Currently amended) A device according to Claim 76 wherein,

- (a) said anterior arms have opposite ends that are spaced apart from each other a distance designated a-a between 8 and 15 cm.,
- (b) said smaller base has length designated b-b between 3 and 6 cm.,
- (c) said device has total length designated d-z between 11 and 15 cm.,
- (d) said larger base has length designated h-h between 5 and 10 cm.,
- (e) said posterior arms have opposite ends spaced apart from each a distance designated i-i, between 6 and 12 cm., and
- (f) said central hole designated U has diameter designated y-e between 1.2 and 3.2 cm.

78.(Currently amended) An implantable device made of soft sheet material with a reticular structure insertable by vaginal surgery into a female pelvis for supporting female pelvic organs, comprising:

a central body having an anterior portion with an anterior edge and a posterior portion with a posterior edge, and two opposite side edges,

a pair of anterior arms extending symmetrically and generally coaxially outward from said anterior portion,

a pair of posterior arms extending symmetrically and downward from said posterior portion and diverging from each other,

said central body having a hole extending through said sheet material, said hole located generally centrally between and inwardly of said side edges and between said anterior and posterior edges, said central ~~[[portion]]~~ body including a cleft extending from said hole to one of said anterior and posterior edges or to one of said opposite side edges.

79. (Currently amended) A method for surgically implanting a device ~~[[according to claim 74]]~~ in a female patient suffering a partial or total prolapse of pelvic organs into the vagina,

where said device made of soft sheet material with a reticular structure for supporting female pelvic organs when inserted by vaginal surgery, includes:

a central body having opposite anterior and posterior portions having anterior and posterior terminal edges respectively, and having opposite sides each with a terminal side edge, about a central longitudinal axis, said sides defining between them a width the maximum dimension of which being designated W, a pair of anterior arms extending symmetrically outward from said anterior portion transversely of said central longitudinal axis, said anterior arms having terminal ends spaced apart from each other a distance greater than W, a pair of posterior arms extending symmetrically downward from said central body and diverging from each other and having terminal ends spaced apart from each other a distance greater than W, said central body having a hole extending through said sheet material, said hole located coaxially with said central longitudinal axis and between said anterior and posterior portions and generally centrally between said terminal side edges, said central body including a cleft extending

from said hole to one of said anterior and posterior terminal edges or to one of said opposite terminal side edges, said method comprising:

- (a) making an incision oriented generally axially of the vaginal cavity in the anterior vaginal wall while excluding the neck of the uterus, and electing to make a separate similar incision in the posterior vaginal wall excluding the neck of the uterus, either before making said anterior wall incision or later in the operation,
- (b) reaching through said anterior wall incision and bilaterally opening the pubo-cervical fascia,
- (c) through said opening of the pubo-cervical fascia reaching the tendinous arch of the levator ani,
- (d) inserting the anterior arms and the anterior portion of said device through the vaginal cavity, through said opening of the pubo-cervical fascia and positioning said anterior portion of said device under the patient's bladder,
- (e) fixing by stitches or staples the two anterior arms of said anterior portion of the device to the right and left tendineous arches,
- (f) making an axially oriented incision in the posterior vaginal wall excluding the neck of the uterus, if such incision has not already been made,
- (g) passing respectively said two posterior arms by the sides of the neck of the uterus, one on the right and one on the left until the central part of said device surrounds the neck of the uterus,
- (h) joining by stitches or staples the adjacent edges of the cleft of the device, and
- (i) bilaterally fixing by stitches or staples the posterior arms of said device to the right and left sacrospinous ligaments respectively.

80. (Currently amended) A method for surgically implanting a device in a female patient suffering a partial or total prolapse of pelvic organs into the vagina, a device made of soft sheet material with a reticular structure formed as a central body having

opposite anterior and posterior portions and opposite sides, a pair of anterior arms extending symmetrically outward from said anterior portion, a pair of posterior arms extending symmetrically downward from said posterior portion, with a hole located inwardly from said anterior, posterior and side edges, and a cleft defined by adjacent edges extending from said hole to one of said anterior, posterior and side edges, comprising:

- (a) making an incision oriented generally axially of the vaginal cavity in the posterior vaginal wall while excluding the neck of the uterus, and electing to make a separate similar incision in the anterior vaginal wall, excluding the neck of the uterus, either before making said posterior wall incision or later in the operation,
- (b) inserting the posterior arms and the posterior portion of said device through the vaginal cavity and bilaterally fixing by stitches or staples the posterior arms of the device to the sacrospinous ligaments respectively,
- (c) positioning the posterior portion of the device under the intestine and behind the cervix,
- (d) passing respectively said two anterior arms of the device by the sides of the neck of the uterus, one on the right and one on the left until the central body of the said device surrounds the neck of the uterus,
- (e) joining by stitches or staples said adjacent edges of the cleft,
- (f) bilaterally opening the pubo-cervical fascia,
- (g) through the anterior opening reaching the tendinous arch of the levator ani,
- (h) projecting the anterior portion of said device through the vaginal cavity and positioning it under the bladder, and
- (i) fixing by stitches or staples the two anterior arms of the said device respectively to the right and left tendineous arches.

81. (Currently amended) A method for surgically implanting the device [[according to Claim 74]] in a female patient suffering a partial or total prolapse of pelvic organs into the vagina,

where said device made of soft sheet material with a reticular structure for supporting female pelvic organs when inserted by vaginal surgery, includes:

a central body having opposite anterior and posterior portions having anterior and posterior terminal edges respectively, and having opposite sides each with a terminal side edge, about a central longitudinal axis, said sides defining between them a width the maximum dimension of which being designated W, a pair of anterior arms extending symmetrically outward from said anterior portion transversely of said central longitudinal axis, said anterior arms having terminal ends spaced apart from each other a distance greater than W, a pair of posterior arms extending symmetrically downward from said central body and diverging from each other and having terminal ends spaced apart from each other a distance greater than W, said central body having a hole extending through said sheet material, said hole located coaxially with said central longitudinal axis and between said anterior and posterior portions and generally centrally between said terminal side edges, said central body including a cleft extending from said hole to one of said anterior and posterior terminal edges or to one of said opposite terminal side edges, said method comprising the steps:

- (a) making an incision oriented generally axially of the vaginal cavity in the anterior vaginal wall while excluding the neck of the uterus, and electing to make a separate similar incision in the posterior vaginal wall excluding the neck of the uterus, either before making said anterior wall incision or later in the operation,
- (b) electing one of the following two steps to be done first, (i) fixing by stitches or staples the two anterior arms of said anterior portion of said device to the right and left tendineous arches, and (ii) bilaterally fixing by stitches or staples the posterior arms of said device to the right and left sacrospinous ligaments respectively,



- (c) ~~(d)~~ passing respectively said two anterior or posterior arms corresponding to step (b)(i) or (b)(ii) above, by the sides of the neck of the uterus, one on the right and one on the left until the central ~~[[part]]~~ body of said device surrounds the neck of the uterus,
- (d) ~~(e)~~ joining by stitches or staples the adjacent edges of the cleft of the device, and
- (e) ~~(f)~~ conducting the other of said two steps in paragraph ~~[[c)]~~ (b).

82. (Currently amended) A method for surgically implanting the device ~~[[according to Claim 74]]~~ in a female patient suffering a partial or total prolapse of pelvic organs into the vagina,

where said device made of soft sheet material with a reticular structure for supporting female pelvic organs when inserted by vaginal surgery, includes:

a central body having opposite anterior and posterior portions having anterior and posterior terminal edges respectively, and having opposite sides each with a terminal side edge, about a central longitudinal axis, said sides defining between them a width the maximum dimension of which being designated W, a pair of anterior arms extending symmetrically outward from said anterior portion transversely of said central longitudinal axis, said anterior arms having terminal ends spaced apart from each other a distance greater than W, a pair of posterior arms extending symmetrically downward from said central body and diverging from each other and having terminal ends spaced apart from each other a distance greater than W, said central body having a hole extending through said sheet material, said hole located coaxially with said central longitudinal axis and between said anterior and posterior portions and generally centrally between said terminal side edges, said central body including a cleft extending from said hole to one of said anterior and posterior terminal edges or to one of said opposite terminal side edges, said method comprising:

making an axially oriented incision in the anterior vaginal wall while excluding the neck of the uterus, and electing to make a separate longitudinal incision in the posterior

vaginal wall excluding the neck of the uterus, either before making said anterior wall incision or later in the operation, electing the sequence I or sequence II steps,

where sequence I comprises:

- (a) inserting said device into the vaginal cavity and inserting the anterior arms through said anterior vaginal wall incision and positioning a portion of said device under the patient's bladder,
- (b) fixing by stitches or staples the two anterior arms of said anterior portion of said device to the right and left tendineous arches,
- (c) passing respectively said two posterior arms by the sides of the neck of the uterus, one on the right and one on the left until the central part of said device surrounds the neck of the uterus,
- (d) joining by stitches or staples the adjacent edges of the cleft of the device, and
- (e) bilaterally fixing by stitches or staples the posterior arms of said device to the right and left sacrospinous ligaments respectively,

and sequence II comprises:

- (f) inserting said device into the vaginal cavity and inserting the posterior arms through said posterior vaginal wall incision,
- (g) bilaterally fixing by stitches or staples the posterior arms of said device to the right and left sacrospinous ligaments respectively,
- (h) passing respectively said two anterior arms by the sides of the neck of the uterus, one on the right and one on the left until the central ~~[[part]]~~ body of said device surrounds the neck of the uterus
- (i) joining by stitches or staples the adjacent edges of the cleft of the device, and

(j) fixing by stitches or staples the two anterior arms of said anterior portion of said device to the right and left tendineous arches.